

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

F. S. FLINT



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IN THE NET OF THE STARS

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IN THE NET OF THE STARS

BY
F. S. FLINT



LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
M CM IX

NOTE

THIS book is one poem.

I have, as the mood dictated, filled a form or created one. I have used assonance for the charm of it, and not rhymed where there was no need to. In all, I have followed my ear and my heart, which may be false. I hope not.

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *English Review* and the *New Age* for permission to reprint some of these verses.

F. S. F.

TO
V. M. F.
THIS BOOK OF HER



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PREOCCUPATIONS

TO

E. J. L.

AND

M. D. E.



IN THE NET OF THE STARS

As I Paced the Streets

AS I paced the streets there came to me,
Although the air with smoke was dim,
And bleak, black walls were frowning grim,
The vision of a sunlit sea,

A crumbling cliff all hacked and torn,
A waste of sand dunes, grey and wide,
And wheeling gulls that dipped and cried,
And scarlet poppies in the corn.

The traffic's jangle and its roar
And human clamour could not quell
The low sad murmur and the spell
Of languid waves that laced the shore.

The yellow sun that sickly shone
On a wan, sere tree, amidst a square,
Recalled a wealth of golden hair
That flowed the long, green grass upon.

Oh! and my heart is far away
From the heavy care and the daily task;
And once again in the sun I bask,
Naked and careless, a-holiday.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Ships in the offing slowly drift,
In the hazy heat of a summer dream,
And little we heed where wind or steam,
On what world errand, slow or swift,

May drive them, so that in our eyes,
Half-closed with the glare of sun, and sleep,
Their steady march may sometime keep
A delicious tremor: How time flies !

As I pace the streets, there come to me,
In an awful wave that stops my breath,
The clutching, griping thought of death,
And the bitter taste of an unknown sea.

Futility

I HOLD the universe in my brain ;
And I walk along the streets and laugh
That Life has mixed with all the chaff
So small a measure, God ! of grain.

And Death is but a parfilage
Of precious threads of silver and gold
That with the stuff of Tellus old
Are woven sparse from age to age.

Annihilation's Gorgon stare
Will freeze the genial Earth at last—
With all her gibbous face icefast,
Her genius vanished—God knows where.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Sunday in London

MY heart is bitter with this barren desolation—
Dead trees, grey skies, gaunt streets, smoke,
grime, and squalor of London ;—

And hark ! a twittering—God ! a smudgy little
sparrow,

Gay in a wild savannah of things ill-done and
undone.

Is there a hope to find, a way to lead us heartsore
From the mephitic hell of dulness and stagnation ?
None, save a glimmering dawn, a lily among cacti,
Scrub and dense poisonous growth of world-wide
desolation,—

A lily of dawn, of hope, and fragrant with a message,
Kindling the age-worn spirit of man to new
creation :

A new song ripening in the sadness as I hearken
To a smudgy sparrow twittering amid the
desolation.

Nietzschean

WILL they remember when they meet again—
These whirling motes that form my haggard
brain—

The rending ache, sad joys, the hopes and fears,
And jarring work and war of hither years ?
When in the coil of changes once more met,
Will they remember or will they forget
The hunger, then the misery and strife
That marked and made their own this gloomy life ?—

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

The dull, slow round of all things mean and bad,
That leave me doubting whether sane or mad
I be,—indeed, or anything at all,
But a wild nightmare in the rise and fall
Of fancy in some spirit's thought-racked brain.
Will they remember when they meet again
All this, and all the filth, and all the grime
Whereof they, in this phantom former time,
Took cognisance and shuddered—O will they ?
They must remember, though both bright and gay
Their path may be for many million years,
Through sunlit warmth.
Steeled with the stern remembrance will they go,
Richer with pain of earthly life, and so,
In a dim, future age, will meet once more,
Stronger that each with each had lived and ached
before.

Palinode

I HAVE grown tired of the old measures wherein
I beat my song,
And as the sounds on the hill-top where the winds
and sea-birds throng,
And the broad and mournful monody of the ever-
singing sea,
In heart-harped rhythms my song henceforth must
well from the soul of me.
For I have lived in a city, far from the sea-birds'
keen,
And have herded with the sordid, the low-browed
and the mean ;

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And I have ached with the dreariness of all its
poverty,
And longed for the great and broad-browed song of
the ever-singing sea.

And once I met a woman there, who came in love's
disguise.

I sang the old measures to her, enchanted with her
lies :

O let me break from the memory of all it meant
to me,

And beat my verse to the broad-browed song of the
ever-singing sea.

The Heart's Hunger

I HAVE the heart of the sea within me, the
strange wild heart of the sea,

The restless longing, the song and sob and wash of
the wave ;

And I desire and desire not the silence and calm of
the grave

To quench and still the passion and storm of soul
in me.

O stars that twine above me, in mysterious deeps of
space,

The heart of the sea within me is anhungered for
your light,

And the howl of my waves breaks sullen in the
impotent vast of night,

And abashed their foam-flecked tops veil before its
frigid face.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And my waves have moaned for your knowledge
since ever our life began,
And the knowledge that is beyond you, I have wept
that it were mine ;
The tears of my numberless weepings have fallen,—
and lo ! the brine
Will wash my heart till it faints and fails, for I have
the heart of man.

Flower Song

I SING my pain.—
Like a little flower
Beneath the rain
I cower—I cower.

My eyes have filled
Too often with tears
For me to wield
The heavy years.

Drenched to the root
I shiver and wait
The withering foot
Of wandering Fate.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Monody

A LONG the road the wind is blowing red
Rose petals and they wed
The brown-grey sand.
In my hand
I hold the roses, and—
Alas! their root was buried
In the heart
Of all my hope.
My blood had coloured them.
I shaped them when—
Past many a horoscope,
Starred'
On the roof of space,—
The ship of earth was ferried
Across the pool of night.

Now on the windy hill I stand,
Red roses in my hand,
And the root withered in my heart.

Along the road the wind is blowing red
Rose petals and they wed
The brown-grey sand.
The roses of my hope and heart dispart.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Unreality

I WAS thinking this evening, surrounded by my
books,

In my dull, drab room, in a drab, noisy street,
That the woods are still there with their intimate
nooks ;

And the bloom on the bramble and wild rose is
sweet :

Epping and Hainault, Saint Cloud on the hill,

And all their green silence, unreal though it seem,
Are there in the darkness—indefinite—still ;

But to me in my drab room they seem but a dream.

Do you not feel the stillness of the feet-unhaunted
glade,

And see the bats a-flitting in the glimmer of the
moon,

And underneath the holly and the wilderness
unfrayed

Of bracken and of bramble know the black
earth's cryptic rune ;

And there where rush and sallow grow and hide a
brackish stream

The frogs hear weirdly croaking and the light
wind sighing low

In the overhanging branches of the forest of my dream,

Where tree and bush come creeping round and
toward me sure and slow ?—

The horror of the forest creeping round me as I go.

In my dull, drab room, in a drab, noisy street,
The bloom on the bramble and wild rose is sweet.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

A Mood and its Images

BEAT out your gold ; ring hammer on the anvil !

O the glow
Of dinted copper, beaten blow by blow,
Shaped, singing dully in a minor key :
Copper and gold and dross how mixed in me !

Copper from gold,
Beating my gold I passed,
Shaping it, working it, melted and cast ;
Old women, young, dull-eyed, of sordid flesh,
Caught, coiled, and crushed in life's unequal mesh,
I passed,
Beating my gold
Into an offering unto her whom last
I would have kissed ; would she have understood
My wistful mood
Had I told
It was not she
I would have kissed in her, but me,
And for my friend's sake only she ?

Alas ! my gold was mercury ;
My offering but the fragment of a thought
My soul had caught
In contact with her dark eyes' spiritual flame
And sobbing music of her name,
Aina !

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Both Sides the Mirror

I SPOKE to myself in the mirror, and said, "It is you."

And nothing the mirror answered. Both our breaths passed away.

"It is you—strange—you, in the mirror, and I—am who ?

Reflexion of you and you of me ?—Ah, who can say ?"

I spoke to myself in the mirror, and he spoke too ;
But a wall of silence lay dead between him and me ;

And neither could hear what the other said, and neither knew

Whether he was reflexion, or I, or both, or what were we.

Pan the Outcast

I HAVE brooded o'er pools in the forest,
Mid the cool, calm frondage and fair.

I have heard the song of a chorist
That has stripped my heartstrings bare.

I have buried my face in the bracken,
And snuffed the strong smell of the earth.

I have felt the cords, one by one, slacken
That bound my brow as a girth.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Like silence, then peace has descended,
And quenched the fierce hate of my soul ;
And the night came, and with I blended ;—
To a bush's black heart I stole.

A Swan Song

A MONG the lily leaves the swan,
The pale, cold lily leaves, the swan,
With mirrored neck, a silver streak,
Tipped with a tarnished copper beak,
Toward the dark arch floats slowly on ;
The water is deep and black beneath the arches.
The fishes quiver in the pool
Under the lily shadow cool,
And ripples gilded by the whin,
Painted, too, with a gloom of green,
Mingled with lilac blue and mauve,
Dropped from an overhanging grove ;
White rose of flame the swan beneath the arches
And, Earth ! my heart is weary this hot noon
Of bearing life, your strange and secret gift.
Lying upon this bank, I hear the rune
Of springtime music, with my soul adrift
Upon its stagnant waters, wondering why
Thus rudderless I float askirt a shore,
A drear savannah, Death.

With ardent eye,
Inflamed with dreams of death and ancient lore,
The wild swan watched and waited for the end
Two hundred years of life its white wings bore.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And I in weary truth my song would blend,—
O heart of sombre lilies, why not now ?—
A broken music, with the swan's full tone ;—
For are you not alone ?—

The sorrow of the woods is on your brow.

Hark ! what wild melody, what bird sings deep
In the dim, silent wood ? Sad sob and start
Of pain, deep-rooted,—good it is to sleep.

The sorrow of the woods is in your heart.

The roses burst to flower and hide the spike ;
—O and the bloom of lilac blue and mauve ;—
And Life has laughter when Death stands to strike ;
And rend the web of wisdom which Life wove.
The wind will blow and all the lilac bloom
Will strow the earth, wan blue and mauve ; the
swan

Is singing, hark ! its only song—of doom,
Of Life and Death, eternal antiphon.

—The gorse is golden ; its roots are deep
In the subtle earth, 'mid slopes of quicken
That rustles down to the stones all lichen
Covered and green from my lake of sleep ;
The saps of Life are strong, and creep,
With the joy that is in the eagle's sweep,
In eager ferment through bush and tree,
While my wings and hot heart pine and sicken
With death of the life that was good to me.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Year after year my life has unrolled
Of the mist-mersed, endless scroll of time ;
Two centuries long, the annual chime
Of daffodil gold with the red-brown gold
Of corn I have seen, and the heather-wold
Turn russet in autumn and bare in the cold
Of winter to sleep till the call of spring ;
Ageworn hoart who hast loved in thy prime,
This is thy song of death I sing.

This, the first melody from my throat,
And last, brings a joy that kills regret ;
My memory dims, the past I forget
As the song thrills through me, note after note ;
Soon will you see my body afloat,
Inert and white, a lifeless mote,
And the Naiades flock where the neck is flung
To claim my soul at my beak all wet,—
Now that my only song is sung.

—The sorrow of the earth is in my soul.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Stellar

BEYOND the moon the pale stars pine,
And swoon in space. The eternal wand
Of night lures on.
Through hurtling dark,
Creating light, the spark of life,
The giddy race swoops blindly on :
Eternity ! Infinity !
Falling, ever falling, down, deep, dark,
INFINITY ! ETERNITY !
Whirling in appalling circles, now
A world evolving, now a worm ;
And helming all a spirit immanent,
Vast, overwhelming, guides the fall,
Unguiding, conscious only, rides,
And riots, revels, dwells, and is.

Beyond the moon my soul has pined,
And swam in grief of what I am,
And of the rune of wind on leaf,
And of the interstellar space.

And love of night is more than day.

Cool of the evening, calm above,
How soon, O Moon, will love enfold,
And mirror purple in its pool,
My soul, star-cold, attuned with thine ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

To the Winds

THE red sands are calling for us and the sea,
And the evening is calling—can she hear ?
New rhythms are aching in my heart—is she near ?
O the red sands are waiting, and is she ?

The red sands are waiting by the sun-red sea,
And none is there to watch and none to care ;
The sad wind is murmuring of its want ; O where
Is she, my unknown Darling, where is she ?

Perhaps I may hold her on the wet sea-shore,
But the evening be gone from the red round moon :
O can it be that night will have come too soon,
And the sea and the wind have ebbed for evermore ?



THE MASK OF GOLD

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

The Mask of Gold

(I) A COUNTRY LANE

RED poppies wanton in the golden corn
That aureoles the green, dividing line ;
Intent, a linnet pecks the tender grain,
Unmindful of the lark, or, all forlorn,
The cuckoo's mournful voice ; wind-tossed and
worn,
Purple and gold with cloud and sun, complain
The white-flecked waves, chanting an old refrain ;
Afar is heard the winding of a horn.

O weave me a mask of gold to hide my sad,
Wild face, white maidens coming from the sea,
Along the lane, with merry eyes and glad :
Thou with the coronal of violets, weave for me
The long drawn gold that floats so full and free
About thee, that I may no more seem mad.

(II) AT A CONCERT

THE violins are sobbing out the pride
Of summer, dearest. Hear you not the wind
That blows so fretfully among the thinned,
Sere leaves, across the fields all bare and wide ?

The violins are wailing, and a flute
Pipes out a cheerful note, as if to hale
The summer back. Alas ! of what avail
When sorrow in our heart has taken root ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Loosen your long gold hair, and let it flow
About me, sweet ; for I would fain forget—
My head upon your breast, eyes dim and wet—
What you and I may know and do not know.

(III) HIS PLEA

LOVE, if I sing the wonder of your grace,
And vaunt the perfume of your amber hair,
The fragrance that your lips and body bear,
And in your eyes the glint of chrysoprase,

You will not chide me—who have suffered sore
The evil of the time and evil place—
That I will look the vampire in the face,
And hear the cry of agony, no more ;

But rather will you take me, half-adream,
Upon your bosom, kiss me on the lips,
And as from silken fillets your hair slips
Bathe my hot temples in the amber stream.

Distance

YOU stood upon the threshold of your house,
And the wind touched your hair and blew
it so

It caught my heart within a net. The blow
Sent my blood whirling in a wild carouse.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

You said, Good-night, and left me in the dark,
And the cold wind that stripped the polled trees
 bare ;
Careless you went, not noting my new care,
But through the open window I could mark,

Full in the lamplight, laughing and elate,
Your golden head against the wall's dark green.
I stood outside amid the evergreen,
And felt like Lazarus at Divos' gate.

Sketch

GOLD on her head, and in her heart's heart,
 gold !

She seems to breathe a rhododendron glow
Of blossoming colour, Fra Angelico
Would love to picture—angels aureoled !

An early Summer in her smiling glance,
The virginal sap and sweetness of her June,
And calm serenity of a crescent moon,
Weaving a glamour where the young leaves dance.

She has too something of unclouded skies
Of day and night about her, blue and dark
In turn, and deep. You see it if you mark
The limpid laughing purity of her eyes.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Simplicity

I AM a follower of Jesus Christ,
To whom a lily of the field sufficed
More than the glory and the gold of one
Who ruled beneath the name of Solomon.
I have the heart to be a little child,
And play among the grasses growing wild,
Gathering, gathering bright little flowers.

Men are too subtle, and they waste their powers.

For life is simple to the violets,
Daisies and buttercups that Spring begets
With warmth of sun and rain on big, broad Earth.
There is a deep content, more deep than mirth.
Or cavil of words, or tears, or questionings
In the slow birth and living of green things.

I have a mind to be more simple than
The twisted, racked, illusioned mind of man.

Christ walked the earth, and in his heart a rose
And in his eyes calm stars that watched the throes
Of men embroiled and cunning. And he wept.
He gathered to him all whom Life had swept
Nearer to earth : women who sold their soiled
Poor bodies, publicans, and men who toiled
By night upon the Lake of Galilee,

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Fishing and awed. He would have taken me,
I think, for I have lain with buried head
Sideways among long grasses, and have said,
"These buttercups that sway amid the breeze,
And form my sole horizon, even these
Small violets and bright daisies are more wise
Than upright men who cheat themselves with lies
Of good and evil."

Christ's feet were weary of the earth He walked.
Mary with ointment Judas would have hawked
Bathed them, and dried them on her falling hair.
O Mary Magdalene, the deed was fair.
So has my heart in its great weariness
Found balm, and shelter in a golden tress.

After the Dance

I GAVE you roses, roses that will die,
Even as we, and as we went along
The muddy streets, shook by a brutal throng,
Their petals dropped, and in the dirt did lie.

I gave you roses, and I gave with them
My love. You took it, though you knew it not,
And set it in your heart, a garden-plot,
Where it has grown to a flower-diadem.

Oh, may our roses in the jostling crowd,
Unlike those others, go through life untouched,
And with their perfume and their bloom unsmutched
Pass to oblivion, head and heart unbowed.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

A Birthday

THE petals of our roses, one by one,
Are falling faded, white and red, to earth—
Are lying wan and shrivelled on the dun,
Rich soil, or flutter in the mad wind's mirth.

Little avails how we may tend the bloom,
They fall and fall; we watch with mild despair;
And all we know is that our present doom
Is slow decay of what we hold most fair.

But, dearest, in the garden of our dead,
Upon the trellis of the rose-clad bower,
Surely to join two roses white and red
Has blossomed an entwining passion-flower.

Once in Autumn

DO you recall one calm, sad autumn eve's
Bitterness, when we walked along the street
And all the while were rustling at our feet
The shrivelled spoils of summer, and "Dead leaves,"
I said, "our hopes—look, not a wind relieves
Our memory of them?" You crept closer, sweet.
I looked into your eyes. Tears sprang to greet
Me, stealing all their lustre, like dim thieves.
Some wind has blown new life into our veins
Since then. Perhaps our bitterness was killed
By its own strength, and driving winds and rains
Have swept and washed away dead hopes that chilled
And galled our hearts, leaving Life free to build
The one dear hope that with us still remains.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Unto us a Child is Born

HE :
Autumn in stained and tarnished red and gold
Breathes on our burnished hearts her misty breath,
And harsh the fowl sound crying on the lake ;
So harsh within us echoes jangled life.

SHE :
Dear, let me rest my head upon your shoulder.

HE :
The birds are fearful in the twilight hour ;
They circle and flutter on the surcharged air,
Then drop like plummets towards the water's lap,
As if to explore the branches mirrored there,
And frightened turn away again and scream,—
As if Life's enigma peered out at them.
But we are only filled with the world's pain,
And hushed and deadened by the city's roar.
Will they not cease ?—they tear my timid heart.

SHE :
Dear, it is sweet to whisper in your ear,
And feel your arm about me. See, a fish
Leaps from the water and then falls again.
Perhaps he leapt into the warm air to feel
The coldness fold on him. Perhaps, who knows ?
The earth and air, with trees and birds and stars
Are realms of wonder to the leaping fish,
And they have stories told from age to age
How some old hero gave a mighty bound,
And swam a glittering highway to the skies.
You think me foolish ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

HE :

No, dear, nothing is foolish
We two may say, and yet all, all is foolish ;—
We may not scream as the birds scream, may not
laugh

As the wind laughs, may not dance as the leaves,
But hawk decorously like that tree'd peacock,
The hideous mockery of a painted world,—
Is it not foolish on the evening calm ?—
And stifle our desires and stifle our hearts.
Oh we are trodden like a narrow road
On which the ghosts of ages pass rough-shod ;
We bear our dead upon our bleeding breasts,
And bone and tissue groan beneath their weight.
The past with resolute feet keeps us apart.

SHE :

The past is robbing me of little children.

HE :

Our bones and flesh are kneaded of its paste :
It mocks us with desire it seeks to baffle.

SHE :

A perfumed name is blooming in my heart,—
Ianthe, violet-blossom !

HE :

My heart is timid.

SHE :

Ianthe !—I would like a baby girl.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

HE :

I shudder when I face the teeming world,—
Foul-breathing dragons and foul creeping things,
The legacy our fathers thrust on us.
The stars weep when a human child is born,
Free of the taint, to suck the poisoned air.

SHE :

Ianthe !

HE :

Listen to the crying birds
Above the lake, hark how the wind caresses
The sere and cadent beech leaves ; if you walk
Upon them they will crackle ; see the shadow
Of tree reflected merge with tree and shore
Into one darkness, pinked with little lights.
One night I saw the faery portals there.
I fled in fear.

SHE :

Ianthe !

HE :

You would lure
Us to our doom, to bend our backs and break them
That we may overarch our bodies' fruit.
Oh it is the past that speaks in you again.
Your call sets tingling all my blood and nerves,
Tense cords that link us with primeval men ;
And we must leave the lake and crying birds,
Forget the stars and kinship with the winds,
The trees wide-rooted deep into the earth,
And only look on these as alien things ;

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And we must plunge into the city's roar,
That comes to us now in an infernal hum,
And heed the event, and bear the ancient dead
Patiently, for one past implies the other.
See, I am yours to bend and break.

SHE :

Ianthe !

Wisdom in the Twentieth Century

DEAR love, forgive me if I laggard seem.
I know you are all wise, all fair, all good
In loving, but I would not what I would,
For fear of breaking ought that in our dream
Casts on our souls its own prismatic gleam.
I feared to spill our hoarded sweets, and stood
In awe before your primal womanhood,
Though eager to rush down the hurrying stream.
How rests the balance 'twixt us twain, who knows ?
But we must wait on the world's pulse, until
It surges in our favour, when the rose
And lilies of your bosom will be mine
Past question. Meanwhile, shall we not each fill
Our chalice hearts with perfume and new wine ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Vow

LAY on one side the flesh's impure stole,
And scale the glacial turrets of the soul.

Evil is earth and Earth is evil, yet
Night sleeps before its woful parapet.

Evil is earth and Earth is evil, yet
Like a high lamp of burning beryl set.

Come, we will take the stars of flaming Hope,
And plot with them a joyful horoscope,—

At the pure will's high-imageried behest,
Scatter new stars on heaven's palimpsest,—

With horn and hue, with horn and hue and cry,
Chase the symbolic beasts throughout the sky,

And laugh like Titans in the yawning aisles
Of swooning space at their Olympian wiles:—

Roses and Rue, and Sword, and Cross, and Priest,
The Book star-lettered and Heraldic Beast,

They fly and change and promise, but they fly,
And we will sweep them from the gaping sky.

A host of stars is dancing in my brain,
And I am drunken with their sweet refrain.

A host of stars is dancing in my brain,
And we will plan the heavens as we are fain.



IN THE NET OF THE STARS



Foreword

I DRINK

*Of that cold flagon of the Moon
Wherein my sun-sweet heart is crushed to wine
For me to sup,
And as I drink it up
Pale blossoms of silver rhyme
With the green damask leaf
And rhythmic bine
Of verse
Through my brain creep
And twine and intertwine.*

He calls on Her to forsake the Earth

TO-NIGHT, we soar beyond the murky earth
(Heigho, the lilies in the garden close);
To-night, we tread a measure full of mirth;—
Over the stars, we dance away from earth—
(And yet beside them blooms a passionate rose).

Come with me, love, and through the Milky Way,
From cloud and dust, into the golden day,
Come with me, love, and we will hark away
Into the shining knotted net of the sky;
And the wide space will lose our lonely cry.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

You linger . . . think ! . . . a wondering world will
gaze,

Stark, at the flashing sky, and ask in amaze—

“ Whose feet, in passing over heaven to-night,
Whose skirts, are blotting out the star-helmed
light ? ”

You linger . . . think of us alone to-night !

What linkèd perfumes hold your heart in bond ?

The delicate lilies round your ankles press.

Oh, I would carry you from earth beyond,

Into the strengthening wine of space, no less,

Alone, uncrowded, silent, and unconned.

He tells how a Vision of Her saved him from Death

LIKE the pure flame of my desire,
Burning candescent in life's blue deep,

Rose your white body before me,

O my flower, flame-petalled, of sleep !

O Primeval, O Earth-heart of fire !—

Like a tall lily swaying beside the waters,

Silent and black, of Night and speechless Time,

Sway, sway, O Thurible, flinging

Your perfume to winds that ever are singing

Their chant through the Cathedral of Earth,

In the organ pipes of the trees.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Silent and black were the waters. They drew me
Sick and an-hungered on to their verge ;
And the sky was all gloomy
With birds that fluttered to lure me
Into the infinite surge.
O my lily of flame and sweet incense,
Green-robed, gold-hearted, and white,
Your fragrance
Stayed my dull feet of their vagrance
Into the ocean of death-bound Night.

He sings a Song in the Garden of Night

○ LOVE, who hold my heart at night,
Let us have cheer while yet is light
Along the avenues of space,
And fragrance in the rose remains.

O Love, your little bosoms are
More to me than the death of a star ;
And the wet grass beneath your feet
I will gather to take with me to sleep.

O Love, I think within your eyes
Is the hush that follows the night's outeries
On silent lakes where brood the stars
Between the dreaming nenuphars.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And dim eternities lie pressed
Between my breast and your white breast
When underneath your armpits passed
My arms enfold and hold you fast.

In the white lilies of your limbs
Is woven the frenzy of the winds
That blow upon earth's mountain wings.

The winds that quarrel with the trees,
And break the surface of the seas.

The winds that leave to-night in peace.

He thinks of Her Lineage

O VER the stars
Came my love to me,
Dancing, dancing
Through Eternity.

She hath walked on planets
Where strange flowers grow,
And her soul hath perfumes
I do not know.

Amid strange peoples
She hath stayed and heard
A music that haunts her
Of man and bird

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

She hath seen strange colours
And drunk the wines
Of a myriad vineyards
And the strangest vines.

In the fields of the moon
She hath strayed, hath strayed,
Among moon roses,
A white moon maid.

And now on the earth
She hath come to me,
Fragrant with spice
Of Eternity.

He thinks of the Stars and the Leaves

A LITTLE murmur in the leaves—
A cold, calm night of many stars.

Thinned by the wind of winter's wand
That whistles like a winnowing flail,
Faintly afar,
And turns the warm earth pale ;
The fretted twigs, the twinkling leaves
Whisper runes of the deeps beyond.
Night-long they have watched each star
In silence and the murmuring wind,—
Night-long through Spring and Summer-time
And Autumn's yellow and crimson prime ;
And now they fall and fade away,
Into the earth, night and day.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

What is the secret ? Time and Change
Creep over the earth
And along the alleys huddles death,
Under each leaf ;
Willy-nilly the withered skirl,
And Life is brief.
Time and Change creep over the earth,
And red rot sucks us back to clay ;
But the stars shine ever and a day,
Little knots in the net of light
That holds the infinite dragon, Night.

A little murmur in the leaves—
A cold, calm night of many stars.

His Heart is in the Earth—

B RAMBLE and fern
Round my heart burn
Their embraces ;
Over the thorn
The green leaf is born
That effaces.

Small white flowers walk
Along the red stalk
All unheeding ;
Beneath, who will say
Is hidden away
A heart bleeding ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Wounds more fierce
The bramble will pierce
Closely creeping
When tamed winds croon
Of love to the moon
And she weeping.

And his Spirit with the Stars

LET us look on the leaf
That grows on the tree,
And there be no grief
Between you and me.

Let us look on the flower
That springs from the grass,
And hour after hour
May come and may pass.

For my spirit has flown
Beyond a bird's flight ;
And I am my own
Alone when the Night

Is drawn from the deep
By the silver net
Wherein the stars keep
Him quivering yet.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

He tells of the Eternal Wistfulness

THERE is a rose on your breast
And a perfume in your hair,—
Warm body, sweet breath, and these,—
I know you are there.

I know ?
—As the wind knows the trees,
As the fish know the swathing water
And the weed and the reed ;
As the rose and the stars that run
Their course round him know the sun,
I know you Earth-daughter ;
And you know my kiss and caress
As the shore knows the sea's.
No more ? But no less.

Like velvet faintly luminous
I see in the gloom your eyes.
Your bosom against me, close,
I can feel fall softly and rise ;—
But you can be to me
No more than a mirrored rose.

A little murmur in the leaves—
A cold, calm night of many stars.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

He advises Her--

DEAR, I have dreams
When the night is flung and the stars fall
About me in white streams
Upon a sable pall.

You will not win
To the high room open to heaven,
Breathless carrier
Of the world's base din.

Say, were it not more meet
To sandal you with poppies for shoon
And of the sacred moon
A ghostly wafer eat ?

Think how ardent and discreet
Would your bearing be,
Your bosom burning white in monstrancy,
And wise your feet !

Dear, when I dream
I would have you thus
Part of my dream,
As though from heaven you came.

Surely before me gleams a firmament of stars !
Surely about my head is jewelled fire of stars !
O come to me, white Vestal of the Moon,
Out of the night.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

I hear your grave footfall upon the stars.
Come! the way is free,
And on my threshold pause a while
That I may see
Night's wonder in your smile.

And gives Her a Counsel of Perfection

I THINK: a rose that were articulate
Might open its heart to every babbling wind,
With no one there to whisper how it sinned,
And none to warn and none to argue, Wait!

I think: a lily at the golden gate
Of innocence might have its candour dimmed
If any eyes but mine approached and limned
It on the shining tablets of their fate.

Disdain the evil spell of speech, and cast
The violet veil of silence on your ways,
O my beloved; broider it with flowers

Wrought in the wonder of your lonely hours,
That men may pass and marvel—at your graces,
Then look on me and envy, having passed.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

He meets Her in a Wood at
Night

THIS is a rose of burning wine,—
This is a star.

This is a rose that grew on a star—
This is a star in a battle line
Of whirring worlds,
Chanting a hymn of flight
In the fight
With Night,—
This is a rose of burning wine,—
Our love.

Voices!
Voices that come through the wood,—
Voices that come through the wood at night,—
Voices that come through the wood at night in
the silence
That is ushered into a frame
Of little noises :

Wind on leaf, and wind that weeps,—
Wind that woos, and wind that creeps
Beneath the bushes and whispers where Pan dreams
and sleeps.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And you came,
And there were no more noises.

But they echo in the aisles
And gusty passages of my pillared soul,
And my doom
Is to be slave of their reverberate tomb.

O rose of burning wine,—
Our love,
Erect on a star
That is our winged chariot
In the fight
With Night,—
O lips of burning wine,
O eyes that lighten mine
Around our heads is a starry wreath,
And the white moon has flung an aureole
From pole to pole,
But Black Night fumes beneath,
And all the stars will sicken with its breath.

Let us creep under the bush to the bed Pan has
made.

I am afraid.

He likens Her to a Rose-tree,
Himself to the Wind

O UR feet are treading on earth's parapet
Over the heavens. Among the stars we stept.

Night has been drawn up trembling from his lair,
And the four winds play in our ruffled hair.

Along the black bare branch sleeps almond bloom,
Silvery in the slow silver of the moon.

You are mysterious, and you speak no word ;
And who you may be I have never heard.

But though this secret I can never know,
So that you love me, I am content 'tis so,—

So that I love you, I, the wind, and you,
The slim young rose-tree against which I blew,

And rapt the earth with perfume. From the lake
The bright swift fish leapt up for your sweet sake,

And the slow buds were quickened in their pale
Green chalices. I woke the nightingale.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Dear, lift your breasts like two white roses to
The stars. The moon will have no shame of you.

In the calm splendour and the pain of night,
The wind will babble songs of its delight.

Our feet are treading on earth's parapet.

DAWN



IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Alba

A WAKE ! AWAKE !

I have gathered you a bunch of early lilac,
Still wet with dew, its little mouths half open.
Come down and take it, O my Lilac among Women.
The morning foams like wine ; come down and
drink it.

O my rosebud, my lily, my fair garden,
Wherein my eyes may walk, and, wandering,
wonder,
Come down and take the lilac I have gathered,
Still wet with dew, though what are both to you !

This morning I wakened when the dawn-flower
opened
Its wide, pale petals and the lark was rising.
I hied me to the forest that I might make fragrant
The song that was to call you from your dreams.

And lo ! I came upon the tree of lilac,
That had blossomed like a dream on night's dark
bosom.

I have gathered you a corbel of its blossom,
Still wet with dew, its little mouths half open.

Come down and take it, O my Lilac among Women !

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

A Song for Spring

OUT of the verdure of my heart
Has broken the bloom.

The Spring has come from her house of gloom,
In her robes of green with the purpled hem
Of all the flowers, and on her hair
Of all the flowers a diadem.
She has wrought with ardour and dainty craft
Blossom of apple, blossom of pear,—
With warp of the moon and weft of the sun
She has spun the flowers,
And dipped them every one
In vats of radiant delicate dye,—
She has spun in the loom of earth and sky,
With a spindle of rain, to the song of the wind.

I have seen her with her sheaf pass by
And scatter my garden with narcissi;
I have seen her fling her daffodils
In a burning cirque about the hills;
And as I lay and watched she stooped
And blew with her breath the buds apart
That hid in the verdure of my heart.

I think of all the covered roots;
I think of the boughs and the leaves on them;
I think of the day when first she came
With a song along the alley of laurels,
A girl with hair of amber flame,
Who woke the blossom in my heart.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

A Song of Change

WE walk in the world, and see with strange eyes,
With the fire at our hearts, and a dream of days ;
Alone in the world, we walk on the ways
(Oh, roses and rags, man's heart is of ice !),
We walk in the world, and are stifled with lies.
Yet will the god return to his gaze.
He will hear the music and beat of the sea
And the way of the wind in a tree.
He will know the silence of forests, their song
And the birds' song and the screams
Of the seagulls that circle and dart and throng
The jagged cliff ; he will follow the streams
Without heeding, with the heart of a boy,
And will watch the darting fish ; he will lie
On his back among daisies and watch the sky ;
Caress buttercups, and steal a subtle joy.
Rain, hail, and snow, and the storm's thunder and fire
He will love, and they will minister to his desire.
The sun will be his comrade, and the moon will be
The mystical white goddess of his love, the sea ;
And of the stars his heart will never tire.
We walk in the world and see with strange eyes ;
From our eyelids has fallen the fringe of lies ;
And broken cries we have to our need,
And sorrows we have, strange sorrows, and tears
For drooping flowers in the garden of life.
For the warping of growth in sapling years,
And the aimless sweeping knife,
And the choking, poisonous weed.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

I have a rose in my garden, milk-white with a heart
of red ;
The wind whispers a song in its petals of hope that
is not yet dead ;
And its perfume comes to me singing the song of a
wind-blown day,
When a sickle will have been sharpened and a scythe
will have had its way.

Unpraised

PRAISE ?—

I sing of the trees
And the wind's and the sea's ways
And the rose that brushed your face,
Yet can I find for you
No praise.

Are you not in my heart,
Nectar and wine of flowers,
Wherein may dart and dive
My word-bees in their hours,
And bring to their brain and hive
Honey, sweet smelling of you ?

Praise—

I have none,
And my days
Go by in dreams and are done,—
I stoop and pick from the path
Of the Wind's wide math
The crimson leaf of a rose
That glows and has touched your robes.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Afternoon

QUIET—
Save for a footfall—
Wooded by
Bird and child call.

Young buds
And blossom are bursting—
Green, white
And red mouth thirsting.

Under
The elm-tree, lying
On the
Thin grass, I wonder.

He is led by the Cuckoo to
jest with Her

ON the hard husk
Of the world's old tree
Has sprung the green shoot
Of your love for me.

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
Sweet mockery !

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

The hawthorn hedge
And the lilac's bloom
Have told each other
In hushed perfume.

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
And a marble tomb !

The golden tulip
Has wagged an old head
In a roguish way
To an empty bed.

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
I would I were dead !

The apple blossom
We saw last night,
Moonlit and as though
With stars alight,

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
Has fallen—in fright ?

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
And if it were true
What the flowers are saying
Of me and you !

Cuckoo ! Cuckoo !
Is it rose—or rue ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Exultation

AND if I dream that we are ever young,
With feet still dancing to the fifes of Spring
Along the ways of sapling woods, among
The violets and anemones that ring
Their children voices round the deacon elms,—

And if I dream that nothing overwhelms
Our hive of dreams,
There is no end,
And the young leaves dance ever in the sun
Upon the wings of the wind,
And ever will your eyes and lips be young,
And ever will your body be a slim
New statue kindled,—

Am I not like a man in this ?—
And like the clear-eyed animals who see
The world about them limned eternally,
Outside of time, undimmed by death,
The mist, a poet's breath,
Who kissed the spirit, and behold !
Death is ?

I have a childish joy of the brown soft mould
Beneath the silver birches in the wood
Of our dreams, and of their twinkling hood
Of leafy lace,—
Joy of the little stars of coy white thoughts
That peep along the thorny bramble holts—

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

Joy of the birds, unrooted flowers of space,
Shaking to heaven a silver chime of bells,—
Joy of the wide wild waste of fern,—
Joy of the glimpse of hart and henn
In silent dells.

I have a childish joy of your living face !

Evening

ONE rose petal
Falls to the moss
With the weight of dew,—
Dusky red on darkening green.

A red rose trembles
In the twilight—
Glimmering silence
And sleeping things.

In the dun earth
Beneath the mosses,
A rosetree tightens
Its lace of roots ;

And the earth quivers.
What is passing ?
What is present ?—
Dusky red on darkening green.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

A Garden Song

I WILL go into the garden and hear the Song
of Songs,
Where the tall straight lavender is wavering in the
breeze,
And swaying beneath the weight of the singing
brindled bees,
I will go into the garden and hear the Song of
Songs.

I will think of my love who has eaten of amber
honey,
And of lavender and heather now's the savour of
her mouth.
The curtained gauze of the sea between two cliffs
in the south
Is stretched, and the song of the sea and the bee
is my Song of Songs.

The Forest of Vision

THROUGH the hushed forest in your golden
hair
My eyes have wandered dimly, in a dream
More subtle-simple than the play we live.
What have my eyes to do with Here and There ?

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

I cannot tell why the leaves do not stir.
I tread a path still odorous with the trail
Of Kings who carried to a little Child
A load of spice and frankincense and myrrh.

And they have gone through the world-waste, those
Kings,
And it is still the same. I have your hair
That veils in gold the forest of all dreams,
Where I remember—and forget some things.

Prophecy

I WILL prophecy before the Lord my God—
Whom I alone can know—
That there shall be abroad a new fervour among
the nations,
And great golden lilies shall grow upon the waters,
And men shall admire.

I will prophecy before the Lord my God
That there shall be a greater concourse of peoples,
And they shall move along the banks of the rivers,
And the shores of the seas.

And they shall make a new Book of golden beautiful words,
Wherein shall be set the spirit of all the flowers
and grasses,
And the many-summited trees.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS

And the spirit that is among them and moves them,
man and woman,
Grave figures and silent in their times along the
beaches of Time ;
And what they shall both see when a man looks
into the eyes of a woman,
I cannot tell.

Yet unto thee, O my Beloved,
O my slender tree of blossom and fruit of tender
apples,
I give my words.

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